



# NEWS RELEASE

## Rural Development

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### **GOVERNOR FOSTER PROCLAIMS OCTOBER “COOPERATIVE MONTH” In Recognition of Member-Owned and -Operated Cooperatives**

BATON ROUGE, October 10, 2003 – Governor Mike Foster has proclaimed October 2003 as “Cooperative Month” in Louisiana to honor the positive, proactive example cooperatives offer consumers in Louisiana.

“Cooperatives operate in every industry including agriculture, childcare, energy, financial services, food retailing and distribution, health care, insurance, housing, purchasing and shared services, telecommunication, and others,” said Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana.

“Owned and democratically controlled by their members, cooperatives stand as truly accountable, business alternatives for consumers,” said Taylor. “Louisiana cooperative members not only enjoy ownership and control of the cooperative, but benefit from the affordable, quality services cooperatives provide.”

Cooperatives range in size from large enterprises, including U.S. Fortune 500 companies, to single, small local storefronts. More than 30 cooperatives have annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion, including such well-known names as Land O’ Lakes, Inc., and ACE Hardware. The top 100 co-ops have a combined \$125 billion in revenues.

USDA Rural Development helps rural residents form new cooperatives and improve operations of existing cooperatives. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

The Louisiana Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents.

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